



PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOODS – FIVE YEARS LATER

IN FIVE YEARS:

- 4,972 illegal guns have been taken off the streets of Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport and Waterbury
- 14,279 gun related offenses were charged in State Court
- 302 Federal Indictments were filed for federal firearms violations
- 8000 Violent convicted felons attended a Project Safe Neighborhood Offender meeting in Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport or Waterbury
- 25,000 At-risk youth were reached through schools, camps and community events in Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport or Waterbury
- 2,142 federal state and local law enforcement officers were trained on the characteristics of armed gunmen, threat assessment in schools and/or gang identifiers
- \$473,069 was distributed to Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport, Stamford and Waterbury Police Departments to support the investigation of firearms violations through overtime and equipment
- Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport and Waterbury now trace 100% of recovered firearms through the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives
- \$100,000 has been allocated to the research of those who commit crimes with firearms and those with the propensity to commit firearms crimes

Project Safe Neighborhoods is a comprehensive, strategic approach to reducing gun crime in America. Since it's inception in January of 2002, the District of Connecticut's PSN initiative has been a successful vehicle to attack and reduce gun crime. The PSN Partnerships have forged bonds and collaborative relationships between and among

prosecutors and federal, state and local law enforcement groups that did not previously exist. These relationships have contributed to improved collaborative law enforcement in firearms enforcement and other areas as well. Our community and outreach partnerships have also been extraordinarily successful.

Since 2002, the Department of Justice has allocated over 1.7 million dollars to the District of Connecticut for the Project Safe Neighborhoods initiatives.

In five years, 302 federal firearms cases have been indicted, broken down as follows:

- Hartford - 105
- New Haven - 69
- Bridgeport - 76
- Waterbury (since 2004) – 9
- Other cities – 43

Of those 302 cases, 219 pleaded guilty, 27 went to a guilty verdict following trial, 13 were dismissed, 1 was acquitted and 42 are still pending.

In 228 of these cases, the defendants were charged with being a felon in possession of a firearm or ammunition, with an average federal sentence of 83 months in prison.

In five years, the State of Connecticut has charged 14,279 gun related offenses. In 2001 the State charged 2381 cases and by 2006, that number rose to 3097 cases, a 30% increase. In 2004, the state prosecuted 394 firearms cases in Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport and Waterbury and 595 cases were prosecuted in these cities in 2005. This is a 66% increase in state firearm prosecutions in one year.

In five years, 4972 illegal guns have been taken off the streets of Hartford, New Haven, Waterbury and Bridgeport. Waterbury police department recovered 129 firearms in 2002 and recovered 300 in 2006, a 132% increase.

The PSN initiative has allocated \$473,069 to support overtime for police departments to address gun crime investigations at five of the largest municipalities in Connecticut; New Haven, Bridgeport, Hartford, Stamford and Waterbury.

Connecticut's PSN strategy includes community outreach and the involvement of members of organizations in communities affected by crime. Connecticut's community based organizations reach out to those recently released from prison and young adults who may be at risk for engaging in criminal activity by offering a variety of resources, including job training, adult education, substance abuse counseling, family counseling and spiritual guidance. \$234,000 has been expended to support both recognition and positive alternative activities, along with transportation costs to accommodate special events.

One of the most important outreach initiatives is the monthly offender meetings held in Hartford, New Haven, Bridgeport, Stamford and Waterbury. At these meetings, the partnerships, in coordination with the Connecticut Board of Parole, the Connecticut Probation Office and the Connecticut Department of Corrections, speak to 35-90 violent felons currently on some form of supervision. Each task force explains the team approach to gun crime, discusses recent cases that have gone through the state and federal system and attempts to persuade the attendees to think twice before possessing a firearm. The second part of these meetings consist of speakers from our community resource partners. These speakers discuss the availability of services to assist with anything from continuing education or obtaining a GED; fatherhood issues, such as custody, visitation and support; obtaining identification such as a valid Connecticut driver's license or certified birth certificates; to career resources, such as interview skills and resume writing. It is during this second half of the meetings that the attendees see that an effort is being made by law enforcement to assist them in making the right decisions. We have reached well over 8000 probationers and parolees through these meetings.

In addition to the foregoing, we have created a video about the PSN program that is shared with each and every inmate before he or she is released from state custody.

We have entered into a strong partnership with our local Fox affiliate in Hartford and with Connecticut Radio Network for all of our media distribution. These networks have donated at least three times the value of our initial output for advertising and production towards the PSN initiative in Connecticut. We have had outstanding success with "Connecticut's Most Wanted." By teaming up with Tribune Entertainment and America's Most Wanted's John Walsh, each week a different Connecticut fugitive wanted for a gun related crime is featured and broadcast on part of the nationally syndicated America's Most Wanted program. Out of nine violent fugitives that have been featured during the 2005/2006 season, four of those individuals have been captured and taken into custody as a direct result of tips received during or immediately following the broadcast of the Connecticut's Most Wanted. Anti-gun and general outreach initiatives involving "most wanted" television spots and bus billboards have been used to create a general awareness of the PSN initiative. The Connecticut PSN has expended \$134,500 in such efforts.

A media campaign was developed and aimed at "straw purchasers" of firearms – individuals who are able to lawfully purchase firearms or ammunition for those who cannot, primarily convicted felons. The media campaign consisted of a 60-second radio advertisement that began airing in September of 2005 on several Connecticut radio stations, and a billboard on Barnum Avenue in Stratford, which both convey the "don't lie for the other guy" message, that making a false statement on a firearm application is a federal crime punishable by up to ten years of imprisonment. The radio advertisement also urges lawful gun owners to promptly report lost or stolen firearms to law enforcement.

Statewide training events for law enforcement on the identification of armed gunmen, federal firearm laws, gang identifiers and threat assessment in schools have been held. PSN has funded close to \$40,000 for law enforcement training over the past five years.

Project Sentry is the juvenile component of Project Safe Neighborhoods. Project Sentry has reached over 25,000 at-risk youth through presentations at schools, youth camps, churches, talent shows and workshops. In addition, to address the increase in gang activity and gun violence Project Sentry presentations have included former gang members and individuals who have been shot and left to die, and others who have been placed on life support to sensitize youth to the painful consequences of gang and gun violence. Project Sentry is also working on mobilizing the many churches in urban communities to encourage them to partner with us in these efforts. Finally, Project Sentry is in the formative stages of organizing monthly youthful offender meetings to address those in the criminal justice system, violence and truancy. We have formed a steering committee comprised of juvenile prosecutors, members of juvenile probation, local boards of education, local police departments and other service providers to assess these at-risk youth and formulate a plan to increase their chances of avoiding incarceration or premature death.

In addition, Project Sentry has supported multiple community events aimed at re-directing Connecticut's youth. Some of these events include a rap/poetry contest sponsored by the Project Safe Neighborhoods initiative, in partnership with the R & B group, Jagged Edge and WZMX-HOT 93.7 which was held with Middle and High School students from Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport. Contest entrants were asked to write a poem expressing feelings about gun violence and how it can be stopped. More than 300 contest entries were received and 41 winners from Hartford, New Haven and Bridgeport were selected. The top five winners from each city were invited to the Hartford Civic Center to attend the Hot 93.7 Hot Jam featuring Jagged Edge in November of 2003.

Also in partnership with HOT 93.7, in 2003 Project Safe Neighborhoods received a \$3,000.00 donation following "Pennies for Peace" Campaign. Students throughout the State of Connecticut were asked to collect pennies for peace. Many schools participated and the total amount raised was \$9,000.00. This donation was divided between Project Safe Neighborhoods, the Urban League of Greater Hartford and the Hartford Mayor's Task Force against Violence. Wilby High School in Waterbury collected the most donations and as a result, they received a free, in school concert by rap artist BowWow (formerly 'Lil BowWow of screen and concert fame).

Project Sentry teamed up with our local Fox affiliate to co-sponsor the August 2004 Connecticut auditions for the "American Idol" television program. Project Sentry not only had the benefit of name recognition through multiple advertisements, but also through the delivery of anti-gun violence literature and sports bottles distributed on the day of auditions.

Lastly, a unique partnership to keep children away from gun violence was created by teaming up with the New Britain Rock Cats, the farm team for the Minnesota Twins. Hundreds of youth from across Connecticut have been able to take part in the baseball experience during the course of the '04 and '05 season. Thousands of Connecticut's inner-city youth were able to attend a game at New Britain stadium, they were given the opportunity to serve as "shaggers" during batting practice prior to each game, with each shagger to receive from the team a baseball glove and t-shirt and a selected youth at each game was given the opportunity to recite an anti-gun violence poem prior to the National Anthem. During the '06 season the partnership continued with the Rock Cats by allowing 24 youth from Hartford and New Britain to work as interns for the team. This experience gave the youth the introduction into running a minor league baseball team, working in concessions, working in the front office and box office, as well as in the team store. This was a six week internship program.

